

REMARKS

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Claim 35 has been canceled and independent claim 21 has been amended so as to include the limitations previously recited in claim 35.¹ No claims have been added. Claims 1-19, 21-30, 36 and 37 remain in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 35-37 are directed to patentable subject matter.

II. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF AN EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT

The present inventions, as defined by the claims, are directed generally to steerable loop structures. Referring to Figure 1, a catheter 10 in accordance with one embodiment of a present invention is shown being used in combination with a sheath 22. The catheter 10 includes a catheter body 12 that extends through the sheath 22. The proximal end of the catheter body 12 is secured to a handle 16. A ***pull wire 26*** extends from the distal end of the catheter body 12 proximally along the ***exterior*** of the catheter body to a handle 28. The pull wire 26 may be used to pull the distal portion of the catheter body into a loop structure 30. The exemplary embodiment also includes a pair of steering wires 52a and 52b that are connected to the distal portion of the elongate body 12. The steering wires 52a and 52b extend through the ***interior*** of the catheter body 12 to a lever 60 on the handle 16.

¹ Applicant respectfully submits that such amendments do not raise new issues and should be entered in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(a) and MPEP 714.12 and 714.13.

III. PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. The Rejections

Claims 1-4, 8, 9, 21-23 and 28-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,332,880 to Yang ("the Yang '880 patent"). Claims 5-7 and 24-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the combined teachings of the Yang '880 patent and U.S. Patent No. 6,048,329 to Thompson ("the Thompson '329 patent"). The rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 are respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended above. Reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

B. Discussion With Respect To Claims 1-4, 8 And 9

Independent claim 1 calls for a combination of elements comprising "an elongate body," "at least one operative element supported on the distal region of the elongate body," "a ***pull wire defining*** a distal portion associated with the distal end of the elongate body and ***a proximal portion extending along the exterior*** of the elongate body toward the proximal region of the elongate body" and "a ***steering element*** secured to the distal portion of the elongate body and ***extending within the interior*** of the elongate body ***to the proximal region*** of the elongate body." The combinations defined by claims 2-4, 8 and 9 include, *inter alia*, the elements recited in claim 1. The cited reference fails to teach or suggest the claimed combinations.

Referring to Figures 1-4B, which were first identified in April 7, 2004 Office Action, the Yang '880 patent discloses an apparatus in which a catheter tube 12 extends through a sheath 26. The sheath includes a slot 40 near the distal end 30. A plurality of electrodes 28 are carried by a structure 20 that is attached to the distal end 16 of the catheter tube 12. A loop is formed by pushing the catheter tube 12 distally relative to the sheath 26, which causes the structure 20 to bulge out of the slot 40. [Note Figure 3A and column 9, lines 17-30.] A bendable spring 64 may be positioned in

the distal end 16 of the catheter tube and one or more steering wires 66 may be secured to the bendable spring. [Note Figures 1 and 2A and column 11, lines 33-53.] Accordingly, although the apparatus illustrated in Figures 1-4B includes “a steering element” within the catheter tube 12, it clearly lacks “**a pull wire** ... extending along the **exterior**” of the catheter tube.

Turning to Figure 21, which was first identified in the outstanding Office Action, the Yang ‘880 patent also discloses an apparatus that is somewhat similar to the apparatus illustrated in Figures 1-4B in that the apparatus includes a catheter tube 12 that is slidable within a sheath (i.e. sheath 150). Here, however, an electrode support structure 144 is mounted on the distal end of the catheter tube 12 and a pull wire 152 extends proximally from the distal end of electrode support structure 144. The pull wire 152, which is secured to a control 166 on the handle 18, **passes through an interior lumen 156** in the catheter tube 12. [Column 16, line 2-6.] As such, the apparatus illustrated in Figure 21 clearly lacks “a **pull wire** defining a distal portion associated with the distal end of the elongate body and **a proximal portion extending along the exterior of the elongate body** toward the proximal region of the elongate body.”

As the Yang ‘880 patent fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the combination recited in independent claim 1, applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-4, 8 and 9 are patentable thereover and that the rejection of claims 1-4, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 should be withdrawn.

C. Discussion With Respect To Claims 5-7

Applicant respectfully submits that the Thompson ‘329 patent fails to teach or suggest anything that would remedy the above-identified deficiencies in the Yang ‘880 patent with respect to independent claim 1. As such, claims 5-7 are patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1 and the rejection of claims 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 should be withdrawn.

D. Discussion With Respect to Claims 21-27, 29 And 30

Independent claim 21 has been amended so as to recite the combination of elements previously recited in now-canceled 35. As the outstanding Office Action indicated that claim 35 was directed to patentable subject matter, applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of claims 21-23, 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and claims 24-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 have been rendered moot and that claims 21-27, 29 and 30 are in condition for allowance.

III. CLOSING REMARKS

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the application are in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested. Allowance of the claims at an early date is courteously solicited.

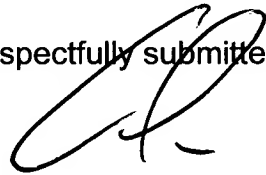
If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call applicant's undersigned representative at (310) 563-1458 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0638. Should such fees be associated with an extension of time, applicant respectfully requests that this paper be considered a petition therefor.

1/27/05
Date

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Respectfully submitted,



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